

## **Appendix VI - Wild & Scenic River Inventory**

### **i. Wild and Scenic River System**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-542) was passed by Congress to preserve riverine systems that contain outstanding features. The law was enacted during an era when many rivers were being dammed or diverted, and is intended to balance this development by ensuring that certain rivers and streams remain in their free-flowing condition. The BLM is mandated to evaluate stream segments on public lands as potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) during the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process under Section 5(d) of the Act. The NWSRS study guidelines are found in BLM Manual 8351, U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior Guidelines published in Federal Register Vol. 7, No.173, September 7, 1982 and in various BLM memoranda and policy statements. Formal designation as a Wild and Scenic River requires Congressional Legislation, or designation can be approved by the Secretary of Interior if nominated by the Governor of the state containing the river segment. The following discussion provides information on how BLM considered waterways for potential inclusion in the NWSRS.

The NWSRS study process has three distinct steps:

1. Determine what rivers or river segments are eligible for NWSRS designation;
2. Determine the potential classification of eligible river segments as wild, scenic, recreational or any combination thereof; and
3. Conduct a suitability study to determine if the river segments are suitable for designation as components of the NWSRS.

This report documents all three steps of the process for the streams in the planning area.

### **ii. Eligibility of Planning Area Rivers & Streams**

#### **Identification**

A variety of sources were reviewed to identify waterways which could have potential for wild and scenic river designation. They include the Nationwide Rivers Inventory List, the Outstanding Rivers List compiled by American Rivers, Inc., river segments identified by state or local government, river segments identified by the public during formulation of the CCMA RMP/EIS, and river segments identified by the planning team as having potential to meet Wild and Scenic River eligibility requirements.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act defines a river as a “flowing body of water or estuary or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills, and small lakes.”

Eleven stream segments totaling 21 miles located on or crossing BLM public lands were identified for review. These streams segments are identified on Map 7 in Appendix I and are listed in Table 1 below.

#### **Eligibility Determination**

Each identified river segment was evaluated to determine whether it is eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. To be eligible, a river segment must be “free flowing” and must possess at least one “outstandingly remarkable value” (ORV). These ORV’s include:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Scenic,       | (7) Cultural,          |
| (2) Recreational, | (8) Ecological,        |
| (3) Geological,   | (9) Riparian,          |
| (4) Fish,         | (10) Botanical,        |
| (5) Wildlife,     | (11) Hydrological, and |
| (6) Historical,   | (12) Scientific values |

To be considered as “outstandingly remarkable”, a river related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale. Only one such value is needed for eligibility. All values should be directly river related, meaning they should:

1. Be located in the river or on its immediate shorelands (generally within ¼ mile on either side of the river);
2. Contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem; and/or
3. Owe their location or existence to the presence of the river.

These are the only factors considered in determining the eligibility of a river segment. All other relevant factors are considered in determining suitability. A river need not be navigable by watercraft to be eligible. For purposes of eligibility determination, the volume of flow is sufficient if it is enough to maintain the outstandingly remarkable value(s) identified within the segment.

Table 1 summarizes the eligibility evaluation of all identified river segments. The table includes information on the length of stream segments managed by BLM, free-flowing status, and outstandingly remarkable value(s) of each eligible segment, if applicable. Table 1 also gives a description of each eligible river segment’s location on BLM Surface Management (SM) maps.

**Table 1: Wild & Scenic River Inventory**

River Name/Segment	Reason Considered (1)	BLM Length (mi.)	Segment/Reach Identification	Free Flowing	ORV (2)	Eligibility
Picacho Creek	C	2.0	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 19, 30, T18S., R11E., SEC 25	Y	C,H	Eligible
White Creek	C	2.8	COALINGA SM, T18S., R13E., SEC 4, 8, 9, 17	Y	F,G	Eligible
Larios Creek	C	2.5	COALINGA SM, T17S., R11E., SEC 26, 35, 36	Y	F,G	Eligible
East Fork of San Carlos Creek	C	1.4	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 2, T17S., R12E., SEC 22, 26, 35	Y	D	Eligible
San Carlos Creek	C	1.0	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 4, 5	Y	D,F	Eligible
San Benito River (1)	C	0.8	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 32, 5	Y	B,D,H	Eligible
San Benito River (2)	C	0.5	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 25, 26	Y	B,D,H	Eligible
San Benito River (3)	C	0.3	COALINGA SM., T17S., R10E., SEC 16, 17	Y	B,D,H	Eligible
Cane Canyon	C	1.3	COALINGA SM, T17S., R11E., SEC 30, 31	Y	A	Non-eligible
Cantua Creek	D	3.8	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., Sec 1, 12, 13, 24 T18S., R12E., Sec 5, 6	Y	B, C	Eligible
Clear Creek and Tributaries	C	7.0	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 8, 9, 17 T18S., R11E., SEC 1, 11, 12, 15, 16	Y	B - H	Eligible
Sawmill Creek	C	1.5	COALINGA SM, T18S., R12E., SEC 1, 4, 15, 22	Y	E,F,H	Eligible

SM = BLM Surface Management Map

- (1) A – National Rivers Inventory  
B – 1988 Outstanding Rivers List, American Rivers, Inc.  
C – Segment in Hollister Field Office riparian database  
D – Other

- (2) A – Non-existent  
B – Scenic  
C – Recreational  
D – Geological  
E – Fish & Wildlife  
F – Historical  
G – Cultural  
H – Other (including Ecological)

### **iii. Suitability of Hollister Field Office Stream Segments**

All river segments identified on Map 7 in Appendix I and displayed in Table 1 (above) were found to be eligible for inclusion into the NWSRS.

Section 4(a) of the Wild and Scenic River Act mandates that all rivers found eligible as potential additions to the NWSRS be studied as to their suitability for such a designation. The purpose of the suitability study is to provide information upon which the President of the United States can base his recommendation and Congress can make a decision. The study report describes the characteristics that do or do not make the stream segment a worthy addition to the system, the current status of land ownership and use in the area, the reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water which would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the system, and several other factors. The suitability study is designed to answer these questions:

- Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?
- Will the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is it the best method for protecting the river corridor?
- Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities that may be partially responsible for implementing protective management?

Pursuant to Sections 4(a) and 5(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the following factors would be considered and evaluated as a basis for the suitability determination for each river (as described further, below);

- (a) Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the NWSRS;
- (b) The current status of land ownership, minerals (surface and subsurface), and use in the area, including the amount of private land involved and associated or incompatible uses.
- (c) The reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS. Historical or existing rights which could be adversely affected.
- (d) The federal agency that will administer the area should it be added to the NWSRS.
- (e) The estimated cost to the United States of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands and of administering the area should it be added to the NWSRS.
- (f) A determination of the degree to which the state or its political subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river should it be proposed for inclusion in the NWSRS.
- (g) An evaluation of the adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development;
- (h) Federal, public, state, local, or other interests in designation or non-designation of the river, including the extent to which the administration of the river, including the cost thereof, may be shared by state, local, or other agencies and individuals. Support or opposition to the designation.
- (i) The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives.
- (j) The contribution to river system or basin integrity.

- (k) The ability of BLM to manage the river segments under designation, or ability to protect the river area other than Wild and Scenic designation.

### **1. Characteristics that Do or Do Not Make the River Segments Worthy Additions to the NWSRS**

Stream segments in the Planning Area are located within the California Coast Ranges of the Pacific Border Physiographic Province. This province was used as a basis to determine if the study segments possess characteristics of at least regional significance that would make them worthy additions to the NWSRS. The Pacific Border province contains the highest rainfall and density of streams in California. Also, many of these streams provide habitat for anadromous fisheries.

The San Francisco Bay and Central Coast portion of the Coast Ranges are considered a distinct hydrological area because precipitation in this region is generally about 50% of that in the northern part of the province and snowmelt influences are insignificant. The tectonics associated with the San Andreas Fault system have influenced the orientation and location of the major river valleys. Sediment yields are high because of high-intensity rainfall, high rates of uplift, and unstable rocks. These small steep watersheds have short lag times and high peak runoffs, and rivers often flood during winter storms.

There are currently 15 designated National Wild & Scenic Rivers in California, which include portions of the North Fork and Lower American River, Big Sur River, Black Butte River, Eel River, Feather River, King River, Kern River, Klamath River, Merced River, Sespe Creek, Sisquoc River, Smith River, Trinity River, and Tuolumne River. This amounts to more than 1,800 miles of rivers and streams that are designated as part of the NWSRS in California.

Many of the eligible river segments within the CCMA have outstandingly remarkable values when considered in the context of other streams in the region. However, the BLM planning team found that all river segments provided below-average to low quality values in the statewide and national context. Therefore, they are not considered to be worthy additions to the system.

In summary, although these values meet the minimum eligibility criteria, when viewed in the context of the California Coast Ranges of the Pacific Border Physiographic Province, the study team determined that these river segments were not of a level of quality to make them worthy additions to the NWSRS.

### **2. Status of Land Ownership and Current Use**

BLM Manual 8351.33A(2), “Wild and Scenic Rivers – Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation and Management”, states “In situations where there is limited public land (shoreline and adjacent land) administered by the BLM within an identified river study area, it may be difficult to ensure those identified outstandingly remarkable values could be properly maintained and afforded adequate management protection over time. Accordingly, for those situations where the BLM is unable to protect or maintain any identified outstandingly remarkable values, or through other mechanisms (existing or potential), river segments may be determined suitable only if the entity with land use planning responsibility supports the finding and commits to assisting the BLM in protecting the identified river values. An alternative method to consider these segments is for state, local governments or private citizens to initiate efforts under section 2(a)(ii), or a joint study under section 5C of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.” Typically, the local county governments have land use planning responsibility for the private lands on these segments. However, BLM has not approached the counties in the Planning Area regarding their support for wild and scenic designation of these segments, because the study team determined that they are not worthy additions to the system and BLM ownership of shoreline and adjacent lands is

sufficient to ensure that ORVs could be properly maintained and afforded adequate management protection over time regardless of designation.

3. Potential Uses of the Land to be Enhanced or Curtailed by Designation/  
Historical or Existing Rights That Could Be Adversely Affected, including Water  
Resources Projects.

Diversion of additional water from any of the streams during the summer low-flow period could impact outstandingly remarkable values if they are present. Wild and Scenic River designation would not impact current water rights, but could affect future diversions from the streams.

4. Federal Agency that will Administer Wild & Scenic River Segments

BLM's Hollister Field Office would administer all river segments under evaluation should they be included in the NWSRS.

5. Estimated Cost of Acquisition and Administration

There would be a minor need to acquire additional lands for Hollister Field Office river segments to be included in the National Wild & Scenic River System. A small number of private in-holdings and CCMA adjacent lands would need to be acquired (or placed under conservation easements) in stream corridors to maintain or restore their character. There would also be a modest cost associated with developing management plan(s) for all designated streams, and coordination with mining claim holders and private landowners to ensure that their activities would not cause offsite (downstream or downslope) impacts that could potentially affect river values.

6. State or local political subdivision participation in river preservation and  
management.

During the initial scoping period no government agencies commented or expressed interest specifically in wild and scenic river designation. However, numerous state and Federal agencies are committed to protecting river related values on the study segments. For example, the BLM and California State Parks OHV Division have funded grants to reduce sediment transport that result from watershed management activities in the CCMA. Plus, BLM is working with Regional Water Quality Control Districts and EPA to implement total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for pollutants in San Benito River (mercury, sediment) and Clear Creek (sediment). In summary, there is already a strong established level of cooperation among Federal, state and local agencies to restore and protect the beneficial uses of streams in the region.

7. Local Zoning and Land Use Planning Adequacy in protecting the river values.

All of the stream segments included in this study are on Federal Lands administered by the BLM and local zoning would not apply. Where the segments cross private lands, most stretches are zoned for livestock, agriculture, or residential use. Livestock and agricultural uses at the scales foreseen within the study segments would not be compatible with Wild and Scenic River designation. Although the private land base in these watersheds could be developed for residences, it is likely to be low density and retain its rural character, which would be compatible with Wild and Scenic River designation.

8. Federal, public, state, local or other interests in designation/non-designation of  
the river. Support or Opposition to the Designation.

A description of other Federal, state and local agency involvement and interest in river management is contained under item 6 above. Residents of the San Joaquin Valley and Hernandez Valley have a long history of active interest in water conservation for flood control and agriculture or livestock use. Although no comments specific to wild and scenic river designation were received during the scoping period, many comments were received regarding protection of river related values including water quality/quantity, riparian habitat, recreation opportunities, and scenic values.

9. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives.

Wild and Scenic River designation for most of the study segments would be consistent with BLM's goals for natural and cultural resources and other agency plans and programs for the region. However, wild and scenic river management and promoting recreational activities on the CCMA river segments in the Serpentine ACEC would not be consistent with BLM and EPA goals to provide adequate protection of human health and the environment.

10. Contribution to River System or Basin Integrity

The contribution of wild and scenic river designation to river system or basin integrity in the planning area would be minimal due to the current regulations and existing efforts to conserve water resources for beneficial uses.

11. Management or Protection other than Wild and Scenic River Designation

In the case of river segments that are found not suitable for designation, the Hollister Field Office will continue to manage these streams as integral ecosystem components on BLM public lands. Management objectives in this RMP/EIS call for continued emphasis on restoration of riparian ecosystems, and other components of healthy watersheds. The preferred alternative for this plan also calls for the BLM to submit applications to the State of California for federal water reserves to protect the aquatic habitat of streams on public lands.

**Recommendation and Rationale**

It is recommended that none of the eligible river segments identified in this study, as defined in Table 1, be designated as components of the NWSRS.

Many of the river segments under evaluation have similar land tenure status, historical uses, and potential or existing uses. The primary factor for the non-suitable determination of all river study segments in the planning area was the conclusion that they would not make worthy additions to the system. Many of these watersheds have been substantially modified through past mining and logging activities and the associated construction of roads and trails. The resulting landscapes would not broaden the representation of key ecosystems within the Wild and Scenic River system. A second factor contributed to the non-suitable recommendation for river segments in the Tucker Zone. Although these watersheds are currently somewhat undeveloped, local and regional planning may consider development in these areas to address California's growing population. The anticipated level of development is not likely to change the character of the watersheds or be incompatible with Wild and Scenic River designation. Biological resources and other watershed values for all streams will be afforded protection through state and local land use plans, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

#### **iv. Protective Management**

All river segments found to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS are placed under protective management by the BLM. Subject to valid existing rights, the BLM is required to protect the free-flowing characteristics and outstandingly remarkable values in the stream corridors. The BLM must also protect the corridor from modifications that would impact the tentative river classification (i.e. change the classification potential from Wild to Scenic, or from Scenic to Recreational). These management restrictions apply only to public lands. Once suitability is determined and the Record of Decision (ROD) for the RMP signed, protective management continues only for those segments found suitable for designation. This protective management remains in effect until Congress makes a final decision regarding designation, or the CCMA RMP is amended.